

REMARKS

This communication is in response to the Office Action mailed on April 16, 2004. In the Office Action, claims 1-20 were pending.

The Office Action first reports that the drawings were objected to because FIGS. 9-11 were informal. Applicant hereby acknowledges the objection and will provide new formal drawings when the present application is allowed.

Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In particular, the phrase "said attenuation means" did not have sufficient antecedent basis. With this amendment, claim 13 has been amended to recite "said attenuation element" in order to meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 9, 12-16 and 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Katshuiko et al. (Japanese patent Application Publication No. 11-052339). Additionally, claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katshuiko et al. in view of Caracci et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,445,838). Additionally, claims 3-4, 8, 10 and 17 were objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

With this amendment, independent claims 1 and 15 have been amended in order to recite subject matter previously recited in claim 3. In particular, the material relates to assembly and fracture of at least two portions of fiber at the end of each of single-mode fibers in an optical core. As a result, claim 3 has been cancelled. As mentioned above, the subject matter of claim 3 has been allowed as noted on Page 6 of the Office Action.

Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 15 are believed to be allowable. Furthermore, applicants submit that dependent claims 2, 4-14 and 16-20 recite separately patentable features when combined with their respective independent claims and are believed to be allowable.

In view of the foregoing, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims. Favorable action is solicited.

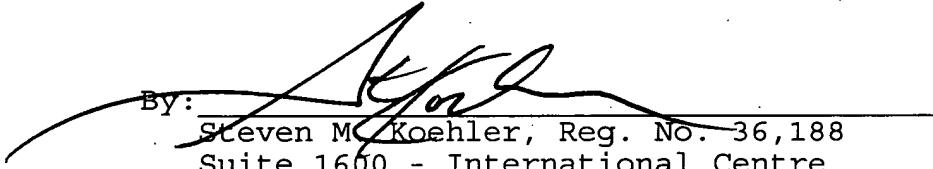
A petition for an extension of time is hereby requested. A charge authorization is included herewith for the extension fee.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTMAN, CHAMPLIN & KELLY, P.A.

By:


Steven M. Koehler, Reg. No. 36,188
Suite 1600 - International Centre
900 Second Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-3319
Phone: (612) 334-3222 Fax: (612) 334-3312